Three new reports have been released that, taken together, create a compelling case for nurse prescribing in hospitals. Each report has something valuable to offer, but together they provide a comprehensive picture of the challenges and opportunities associated with nurse prescribing.

**From The New England Journal of Medicine**

The New England Journal of Medicine has published a study that explores the relationship between nurse prescribing and patient outcomes. The study found that nurse prescribing was associated with better patient outcomes, including reduced hospital stays and lower rates of medication errors. The researchers concluded that nurse prescribing can improve patient care and reduce healthcare costs.

**Creating a culture of excellence in nursing**

By Pamela Klauer-Troits, Tracy Lewis, and John Leonard

Most health-care organizations face the challenge of creating a culture of excellence. This requires a commitment to quality and a focus on the needs of patients. The Society promotes the model of "Relationship Centered Care," which emphasizes the importance of building strong relationships between nurses and patients. The model encourages nurses to provide care that is personalized, compassionate, and patient-centered.

**Evidence, ideas and actions: New reports on the state of the shortage**

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Thinking outside the box:
Non-traditional educational programs that get nurses into positions to lead

Tomorrow's nurse leaders must come from more than just major universities and schools of nursing. Programs, students in high school are given the exposure and experience that sets them up to be nursing leaders, and in another, foreign-born nurses are given the assistance needed to begin practicing in the United States.

In California: A high school nursing academy
Students at a medical magnet high school in Santa Clara have been taking advantage of programs that introduce them to nursing and to allied health fields. The programs originate with the California's Regional Health Occupational Resource Center (RHORC) in the Bay Area Region. Programs include views of clinical settings, speakers and course work. Students are prepared to continue their academic careers in nursing or health fields. The programs begin practicing in the United States.

In Washington D.C.: Bringing foreign-born nurses into U.S. hospitals
A week of nursing and health is outside the United States.

The knowledge momentum continues: Young bike riders are safer wearing a helmet

By wearing a helmet when riding a bike, children and adolescents can prevent serious head injuries. Not surprisingly, traumatic brain injuries often result in permanent disability and death. Many children and adolescents are killed or suffer severe brain damage from head injuries sustained in bicycle accidents. The risk is especially high for children ages 5 to 14. In fact, 60 percent of all bicycle-related deaths involve children.

A new kind of Excellence is taking shape

Our work as nurses is a continual effort to improve and do better. We strive to be better managers, teachers and mentors. We have a passion for the better ideas. Excellence is the core of our work in creating Excellence as well. And with next issue's release, you'll discover the next generation of this newsletter that is more informative, more interesting and more useful. In a word, better.

Dialogue and investigation
Excellence has migrated to a new phase. In a digital environment, Excellence will become a starting point for conversations between the articles' authors and you. Resources and background information that help to shape articles will emerge from the background. You will be made available to you for instant exploration. Back issues will be added and searchable. And, for those of you who appreciate the ability to have access to our archives, a new search feature will allow you to find what you need quickly and easily.

Keep watching (both) your mailboxes
Excellence will be entirely and exclusively online with the next issue, but we'll let you know when it's posted and ready for your eyes. Next quarter, a postcard announcing the new issue and highlighting some of the top articles will arrive in members' postal mailboxes. Members who have shared their e-mail addresses with Sigma Theta Tau International will receive an e-mail with immediate links to the new issue.

Future issues will be announced from the society's Web site and through e-mail to members. Which brings up a good question: Do we have your e-mail address? By registering an e-mail address with Sigma Theta Tau International, you will be among the first to know when a new Excellence is available and what's waiting there for you to explore. It's simple, and you'll have the opportunity to participate in the development of the next issue of Excellence. To sign up, please visit www.nursingsociety.org/publications/excellence.html to enter your name and e-mail.

We invite you to share it with us.

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The Sigma Theta Tau International (Theta Tau International) is the premier international honor society for nurses. We provide a multitude of opportunities for nurses to contribute to the profession, including opportunities to participate in a variety of research and service activities, and to develop leadership skills and knowledge. Through our policies and programs, we provide nurses with the tools they need to succeed in their careers. Our commitment to excellence is reflected in our membership, which includes nurses from all over the world. We are dedicated to supporting nurses in their efforts to improve the health of the public. Through our publications, educational programs, and other initiatives, we work to advance nursing education and practice, and to promote the advancement of the nursing profession. Theta Tau International, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization incorporated in the State of Illinois. Theta Tau International, Inc. is registered as a foreign corporation in California under the Uniform Fraudulent Filing Act. Theta Tau International, Inc. is recognized as a public charity by the IRS. Theta Tau International, Inc. is exempt from Federal income tax to the extent provided by law. The regular tax exempt status of Theta Tau International, Inc. is in effect for tax years beginning with the calendar year 1984.
EVIDENCE, IDEAS & ACTIONS ... FROM PAGE 1

provide the necessary leverage to give EVIDENCE, IDEAS & ACTIONS change?

From The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: Re-Envisioning Nursing

In a report entitled "Health Care's Human Crisis: The American Nursing Shortage" authors Bobbi Kimball, RN, MBA, and Edward O'Neal, PhD, MPA, of Health Workforce Solutions conclude that the complex and enduring nature of the current nursing shortage requires bold new solutions.

The report and fund were provided by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and calls on the philanthropic sector to provide the crucial leadership and resources to help create and fund new solutions.

The authors' central solution is the formation of an independent body of nurses and health-care stakeholders to address the shortage and the reasons behind it. They call for the creation of a National Forum to Advance Nursing. This new organization would, as envisioned in the report, build upon the vast numbers of activities that are already underway, acknowledge their value and, ultimately, help nurses and nursing by further advancing the profession.

The proposed National Forum would focus on four strategic areas:

- Create new nursing models that address both the current shortage and broader health and social issues.
- Reinvent nursing education and work environments to align with a new generation of nurses.
- Establish a national workforce measurement and data collection system.
- Create a clearinghouse of effective strategies to advance cultural change within the nursing profession.

According to the report, "If lessons from the nursing shortage are any guide, addressing a systemic problem requires the input of all of those who have a stake in that system. The National Forum[s] would provide the necessary structure to bring together all stakeholders in a collective effort to develop meaningful, lasting solutions to the American nursing shortage."

"Sigma Theta Tau will be at that table," responds Dickinson-Hazard.

"This organization is already actively engaged—at an international level—addressing the nursing shortage and the issues behind it. We look forward to adding the voices of nurse leaders, scholars, educators and researchers."

From the American Hospital Association: Challenging Leaders to Change

The Commission of Workforce, a multi-disciplinary task force of the American Hospital Association (AHA), has recently published a detailed set of recommendations for hospital leadership entitled "IN OUR HANDS: How Hospital Leaders Can Build A Thriving Workforce."

The report places nurses at the center of several of its clear and comprehensive recommendations saying "While technology, market share, financial performance, physician recruitment and facilities management are all important to a hospital's success, they fail to include an important truth: health care is always about people caring for people."

The report recommends that hospital leaders, with nurses at the center, must be included in a human resource strategy based on continual input and a partnership model. According to Dickinson-Hazard,

"This report—aimed at hospital directors and administrators—is unequivocal in its language that so many current programs are not working. Clearly, a new model of care is required that lets nurses do what they do best, and it's encouraging to see administrators reading what nursing has been saying for years."

The AHA task force report makes five broad recommendations then balances each with the significant challenges that stand in the way.

Concrete strategic and tactical recommendations are attached to each recommendation, supported by existing background data (when available) and profiles of hospitals (including individual administrators, complete with contact information) that succeeded in implementing tactics that have made measurable differences in care or positive contributions to the hospital's culture.

The categories forming the cores of the strategic and tactical recommendations are:

- Foster meaningful work
- Improve workplace partnerships
- Broaden the base of workers
- Collaborate with other hospitals
- Build societal support

This report calls for immediate and sustained action by hospitals, associations, schools and universities, foundations, and others—but identifies hospital leaders as the keys to making changes to address the current shortage and prevent a long-term crisis. In words of the report, "The changes are not easy...but they are necessary."

Nurse-Staffing Levels and the Quality of Care in Hospitals

By Jack Needleman, PhD, Peter Buerhaus, RN, PhD, Soeren Mattke, MD, MPH, Maureen Stewart, BA, and Katyá Zelevinsky.

Published by The New England Journal of Medicine

www.content.nejm.org

Health Care's Human Crisis: The American Nursing Shortage

By Bobbi Kimball, RN, MBA, and Edward O'Neal, PhD, MBA, of Health Workforce Solutions

Funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

www.rwjf.org

IN OUR HANDS: How Hospital Leaders Can Build A Thriving Workforce

By the Commission of Workforce, a multi-disciplinary task force of the American Hospital Association (AHA)

www.aha.org


The Honor Society of Nursing Sigma Theta Tau Interna­tional recognizes the nursing shortage as a major threat to the future of the world's health care system. We recommend several steps by which this challenge can be met. Sigma Theta Tau recommends the following initiatives:

- Demonstrate to health-care leaders that nurses are the critical difference in American health care.
- Reposition nursing as a highly versatile profession by where young people can learn science and technology, customer service, critical thinking, and decision-making.
- Construct practice environments that are interdisciplinary and build on relationships among nurses, physicians, other health-care professionals, patients and communities.
- Create patient care models that encourage professional nurse autonomy and clinical decision-making.
- Develop additional evaluation systems that measure the relationship of timely nursing interventions to patient outcomes.

Establish additional standards and mechanisms for recognition of professional practice environments.

Develop career enhancement incentives for nurses to pursue professional practice.

Evaluate the effects of the nursing shortage on the preparation of the next generation of nurse educators, nurse administrators and nurse researchers and take strategic action.

Implement and sustain a marketing effort that addresses the image of nursing and the recruitment of qualified students into nursing as a career.

Promote nurses of all educational levels to pursue higher education.

Develop and implement strategies to promote the retention of RNs and nurse educators in the workforce.

The Mentor-Fellow Forum

Are you a leader willing to guide the development of ambitious professionals? Become a Chiron Mentor.

Are you beginning your career or pursuing a new interest and looking to develop your leadership skills? Become a Chiron Fellow.

Deadline for Mentor-Fellow 2003 applications: August 30, 2002

To apply: www.nursingsociety.org/programs e-mail: leadership@stti.iupui.edu

Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing

Present your work at the 2003 Biennial Convention

The Honor Society of Nursing's 2003 Biennial Convention will be held in Toronto, Canada, from November 1 through 5. The call for abstracts and presentations has begun.

Check the society's Web site at www.nursingsociety.org for submission requirements and deadlines.

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Celebrating nurses as a society, and as a nation

National Nurses Week was marked by the society in a number of ways. Banners hung from the Center for Nursing Scholarship for an entire month; e-mail messages were sent to over 50,000 society members with words of appreciation and an offer to complete an online case study for free and earn two CE credits.

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Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow campaign recognized with a top national award

Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow, a coalition of leading nursing and health-care organizations, including Sigma Theta Tau International, has been awarded the Public Relations Society of America’s 2002 Silver Anvil Award, which honors the best in strategic public relations planning and implementation.

It’s a significant achievement, on par with journalism’s Pulitzer Prize and Broadway’s Tony Award.

The award in honor of the campaign’s research, planning, execution and results over a sustained campaign. There were 603 entrants in this year’s Silver Anvil competition and only 47 winners. Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow won in the public service category, beating strong campaigns from McDonald’s and Gould Electronics.

“As a Silver Anvil Award winner, Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow has been recognized by its industry peers to have met the highest standards of performance in the public relations profession,” said Gerard F. Corbett, chairman of the 2002 Silver Anvil Awards and vice president of Hitachi America Ltd. “We congratulate them on the exemplary research, planning, execution and results they delivered in this program.”

Sigma Theta Tau walks against Alzheimer’s disease

Sigma Theta Tau is launching a new initiative with the Alzheimer’s Association through their nationwide fundraising event, Memory Walk.

The society has committed to take part in the National Team Initiative by encouraging members to form Memory Walk Teams. A National Memory Walk Team is a group of 10 or more individuals walking together as a single nationwide entity.

Chapters can get involved by selecting a team captain, who will recruit team members and set team goals. If you are interested in becoming a team captain or have questions about Memory Walk, contact Lauren Hickel, National Team Recruitment, Memory Walk at 800.272.3900.

...CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE FROM PAGE 1

- Defining expectations.
- Clarifying culture-supporting behaviors, and.
- Providing consequences (both positive and negative) when behaviors are met or not met.

The formula for success must include consequences or the old behaviors will continue and the new behaviors will not take root and grow. Leading by example, healthcare organizations must also continuously reinforce the message to sustain the culture changes and improve the overall setting for nurses work.

Pamela Klauer Triolo, RN, PhD, YAAN, is chief nursing executive and senior vice president; Tricia Lewis, RN, MS, CNA, and John Leonardi, RN, MS, CEN, are nursing directors; and Mary Shepherd, RN, MS, CNA, is nursing leadership fellow at The Methodist Hospital, Texas Medical Center, Houston, Texas.